

**Town of West Hartford
Conservation and Environment Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 30, 2015, 7:00 PM
Town Hall, Room 314**

Commission called to order at approximately 7:10 P.M.

1. Roll Call: Brian McCarthy (Chair), Matt Macunas, Dallas Dodge, Scott Sebastian and Dennis Durao.
2. The October 2015 CEC Meeting Minutes were approved (on Motion by Macunas, Second by Dodge).
3. Communications and News: The Chair informed commissioners about information on the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's website relevant to the Commission's charge and recommended the commissioners review the same.
4. Old Business:

Application (IWW #1040) of the Center Development Corporation (Contract Purchaser/Developer) (Susan A. Hays, Attorney) requesting approval of a map amendment to the Official Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Map of the Town of West Hartford for property located at 27 Park Road and 14 Ringgold Street. The proposed amendment is based on an on-site soil survey prepared by a professional soil scientist. (Submitted for IWWA receipt on November 5, 2015. Suggest required public hearing be scheduled for December 7, 2015.)

Application (IWW #1041) of the Center Development Corporation (Contract Purchaser/Developer) (Susan A. Hays, Esquire), requesting approval of an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Permit to conduct certain regulated activities which may have an adverse impact on a wetland and watercourse area. The applicant is proposing to redevelop and reuse the existing primary building and construct a new residential building containing 310 apartments units and 36 residential living units along with the associated site grading, drainage and landscape improvements at property located at 27 Park Road and 14 Ringgold Street. (Submitted for IWWA receipt on November 5, 2015. Presented for determination of significance.)

The Applicant was represented by Susan Hays (Updike, Kelly & Spellacy) Peter R. DeMallie (Design Professionals), Daniel H. Jameson (Design Professionals), Henry Thomas (landscape architect) and John Ianni (soil scientist), who presented two applications: IWW #1040; and IWW #1041. These applications were initially presented to the Commission at its October 26, 2015 meeting and pertain to a wetland map amendment and the redevelopment and new construction on that certain parcel commonly known as the Sisters of St. Joseph Chambery property, located at 27 Park Road, along with significant proposed site work to accommodate the new development. Construction is anticipated to commence in spring of 2016.

The Chair discussed a third party review – and related report, dated November 25, 2015 – of the wetland and soil aspects of the inland wetland applications, conducted by Connecticut Ecosystems, LLC at the request of the Town of West Hartford (the “Town”). Attorney Hayes explained that the third party review report was issued on the same date the Applicant submitted its most recent applications to the Town, and, as such, the materials before the Commission might not fully address certain of the subjects discussed in the report. Attorney Hayes also provided the Commission with two documents in which the Applicant responds to comments of the Engineering Division and Town Planner on its application from letters of November 9, 2015.

Mr. Jameson provided an explanation of the updated – yet not most current – site plan and informed the Commission that the previously proposed flood storage area planned to be excavated in the wetland area, will no longer be constructed, reducing the total construction within the delineated wetland from 6,000 sq. ft. to 1,300 sq. ft. and eliminating the related excavation into the flood plain. Mr. Ianni stated that there will be supplemental shrub planting, including Sycamore trees for canopy cover, within the wetland on the southern portion of the watercourse to enhance the functions of the wetland (e.g., sediment/toxicant/pathogen retention).

The “Army Corps” wetland boundary line on the site plan was removed, as recommended by both the Town and the third party review. The pavement abutting the existing structure will be removed to accommodate three new, five-story buildings, the erection of which require a grade change; and new parking lot will be constructed further south on the parcel – and within the regulated area, which seems to serve as a flood plain for the brook. Storm water runoff from such parking area will shed to a 30” wide gravel channel abutting and parallel to the parking lot that is underlain by a perforated 8” HDPE pipe that will convey all captured runoff to the detention basin, excessive flow not captured by this channel and pipe will sheet flow directly into the detention basin from this parking lot.

The other open parking area, located in the western portion of the parcel, will be bordered by curbing that will direct storm water runoff to catch basins, which will pipe water to the on-site detention basin (discussed further *infra*). Fronting that parking area will be new shrub and tree plantings to “soften” the area’s appearance. Commissioner Sebastian was concerned that the parking area virtually abutted the 100-year storm boundary line; however, the existence of the curbing, which is designed to reduce any significant sheet flow somewhat mitigated, but did not fully alleviate, the commissioner’s concern.

The ground in which the basin is to be constructed presently comprises silt loam over natural clay. Mr. Ianni stated that the area lacked a natural profile, but presented with a disturbed, profile. That is, previous work in the area appears to have been performed. The detention basin will be equipped with approximately eight level spreaders to reduce runoff velocity and prevent erosion. The basin will slope 1.5 ft. in an easterly direction over 600 ft. for purposes of drainage. Representatives of the Applicant indicated that the one percent slope recommended by the Town is simply not feasible. The southeastern portion of the detention basin will have a plunge pool for additional velocity reduction and a pipe through which water will flow into the existing drainage on Prospect Avenue. The immediate area surrounding the basin will be a wet-tolerant seed mix with inter-planted perennials, and that area will be further surrounded by a wildflower seed mix. As compared to the present rate of storm water runoff, Mr. DeMallie represented that,

following construction of the proposed development, the rate of runoff from any storm event will be reduced.

As for sediment and erosion controls, Mr. Jameson explained that a silt fence will border the construction limit. The construction entrance on Park Road will have an anti-tracking pad to reduce debris transferring from the site to the roadway. Mr. Jameson noted that the contractor will be required to implement measures to mitigate the likelihood of vehicles carrying debris onto Park Road. Because certain of the garage construction will require grading, stock piles will be located in areas closest to the excavation site and enclosed by silt fences. A siltation basin will be maintained to prevent sediment from entering the drainage outlet structures of the detention basin; and water cleaned through the siltation basin will be filtered out through a perforated pipe to existing drainage. The drains and catch basins throughout the site will also be covered to prevent the entrance of sediment.

The Chair expressed concern regarding the watercourse traversing the parcel, which, in the third party review report, was depicted with eroded banks of varying degree. Mr. Ianni acknowledged that a lack of vegetation impairs the banks' stability. He also noted, however, that a sewer pipe in close proximity to the watercourse is likely also contributing to any visible erosion. The Chair inquired as to whether work could be performed to the watercourse to stabilize its banks. Mr. Ianni opined that the banks will find their natural angle of repose, and any stabilization efforts would prove arduous without associated grading. Mr. Ianni further indicated that riprap could be applied to the outlet structure of the watercourse at Park Road for energy dissipation. The proposed development provides for a "no mow zone" – of approximately 10-15 ft. – on the north side of the watercourse located on the southern portion of the parcel. The Commission expressed its desire for the "no mow zone" to include both sides of the entire watercourse, and the representatives of the Applicant appeared amenable to this recommendation.

Commission Sebastian wanted his concerns noted regarding the close proximity of certain parking to the 100-year flood boundary line; and, as set forth above, the Commission also expressly noted its desire for the "no mow zone" to encompass the sides of the entire unnamed watercourse.

5. New Business: None.

6. Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55pm (on Motion by Macunas, Second by Sebastian).